

This summer I had the opportunity to step out of my comfort zone and participate in an experience that helped me grow as an individual, as well as professionally. I set forth on a study abroad trip to Dublin, Ireland. I have always dreamed of studying abroad and learning firsthand about another culture and I finally decided it was time to take that leap. As a non-traditional student being the age of 29 and commuting to school, I have missed out on campus living and experiences that come alongside being a typical college student. I made the decision when I was accepted into ISU, that I would gain my college experiences participating in the Dublin, Ireland study abroad program. I immediately began applying for scholarships and I am very thankful I did. I was awarded the Global Initiatives Study Abroad Scholarship, which was tremendously helpful with funding my trip.

This was one of the most memorable experiences that I have ever had, every day was an adventure. I shared this experience with 20 other girls, who all started out as strangers but by the end of the trip, became great friends. This trip was wonderful because we were given the opportunity to observe in special and general education classrooms throughout Dublin. I learned a wealth of information about different techniques and strategies that Irish schools use. It was interesting talking with the administrators and teachers of these schools and having the opportunity to compare the similarities and differences of the schools in Ireland to those in the United States. As a future special education teacher, this element of the trip will always remain close to my heart. Every school was remarkable and we were able to talk with the students and answer any questions that they had.

During our time in Ireland, we also explored different cities, such as Belfast, Galway, Kilkenny. We were given ample amount of time for exploring. We spent our time exploring different castles, Phoenix Park, Jameson and Guinness breweries, walking the streets of Dublin, meeting and talking with locals at different pubs, and so much more. Ireland is such a beautiful place, looking back at photos since I have come back home, I realize how none of them do Ireland's beauty any justice. I am so blessed to have had the opportunity to participate in this experience. I strongly advise anyone who is considering taking a trip such as this, to not hesitate because I promise you will fall in love with Ireland, just as I did.



